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RUEAWJB/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 18 MANILA 000688

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STATE FOR G/TIP - SNEUMANN, MTAYLOR
STATE ALSO FOR G, INL, DRL, PRM, IWI, EAP/RSP, EAP/MTS
LABOR FOR ILAB
PASS TO USAID FOR ANE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [PREF](#) [ELAB](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES -- SEVENTH ANNUAL TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS REPORT

REF: A. 06 STATE 202745
[1](#)B. 06 MANILA 944

(U) This cable is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please
handle accordingly.

[1](#)1. (U) Mission's seventh annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP)
report follows below. The report covers the period from
April 2006 to March 2007. Point of contact (POC) is
Political Officer Barry Fullerton, FullertonTB@State.Gov,
(632) 528-6300 x2350, fax (632) 523-1195. Rank of TIP action
officer is FS-04. Estimated completion time for report: SFS
officer: 2 hours; FS-02 officers: 8 hours; FS-04 officers:
100 hours; FSN: 80 hours.

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Overview
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[1](#)2. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained
in Ref A, Para 27:

[1](#)A. The Philippines is an origin, destination and, to a
lesser extent, transit country for men, women, and children
trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labor.
Trafficking also occurs within the country's borders.
Estimates of various NGOs and government agencies vary
significantly -- some putting the number of Filipinos
trafficked internally, into Southeast Asia, and beyond, at
hundreds of thousands each year. Aside from working in the
commercial sex industry, many trafficked persons work as
domestic servants, as well as in unsafe and exploitative
industries as forced labor.

Women face a far greater risk of becoming victims of
trafficking than men, and girls are more at risk than boys.
Trafficking in children is generally internal: children and
young women from poor farming communities in the Visayas (the
central Philippines) and Mindanao (the southern Philippines)
are brought to major urban centers and employed as factory
workers, domestic helpers, or prostitutes. Victims of
trafficking for sexual exploitation are generally girls, aged

7 to 16 years old. Ethnic minorities, migrant workers, and other socially marginalized groups are more at risk than other groups due to the high prevalence of poverty among them.

The Philippine government (GRP) has no central database of trafficking information; however, various GRP agencies and non-government organizations document cases of trafficking. The GRP's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT) hopes to create a central database for tracking cases of TIP by 2008. In 2006, the Department of Social Welfare and Development reported to have provided services to 1,567 victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking in 2006. The Solidarity Center/Trade Union Congress of the Philippines Anti-Trafficking Project recorded a total of 29 trafficking and trafficking-related incidents involving 223 victims from April 2006 to February 2007.

Sources of information involved in the preparation of this report include the following GRP agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA); the Department of Justice (DOJ); the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG); the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI); the Bureau of Immigration (BI); the Philippine National Police (PNP); the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA); and, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). The following NGOs also provided input: the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS); Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP); the Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF); The Asia Foundation (TAF); and the International Justice Mission (IJM). Some information stemmed from media reports.

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1B. Endemic poverty, a high unemployment and underemployment rate, a cultural propensity to seek higher living standards elsewhere, a weak rule of law environment, and a flourishing sex tourism industry all contributed to the continuation of trafficking in the Philippines. Persons were trafficked from poor, rural areas throughout the Philippines to major urban areas within the country, especially Metro Manila and Cebu. Often, foreign trafficking rings brought the victims to destinations throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South Africa. International organized crime gangs also trafficked persons from mainland China through the Philippines to third country destinations. Occasionally, the Philippines was the final destination point for persons trafficked from China.

The GRP made some progress in combating trafficking in 2006, particularly in the areas of law enforcement coordination and victim protection and assistance. However, there were no new convictions under the 2003 Anti-TIP Law since convictions in December 2005, despite dozens of TIP cases pending or already on trial in the courts. Slow processing times, as well as corruption within GRP law enforcement agencies, appeared to be the key obstacles to additional convictions. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to provide assistance to victims and placed pressure on GRP officials to bolster anti-TIP activities.

After the passage of the anti-trafficking legislation in May 2003 (R.A.9208), the government established the Task Force on Anti-Trafficking in Persons, which is composed of 17 prosecutors from the DOJ who focused specifically on trafficking. Additionally, approximately 72 prosecutors in regional DOJ offices focused on trafficking in persons. DOJ continued to lead the GRP's efforts, with the Secretary of Justice acting as Chair of the GRP's anti-TIP coordinating body, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her administration frequently spoke out in public about the evils of trafficking and the efforts of the GRP to combat TIP. They made clear there was zero tolerance by the GRP relating to TIP in any

form. In her State of the Nation Address (SONA) on June 24, 2006, President Arroyo cited the convictions of human traffickers as an important accomplishment resulting in the removal of the Philippines from the State Department's Tier Two Watchlist. On December 12, 2006, the President issued Proclamation No. 1172, declaring December 12 as the National Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

The Anti-TIP Law codified stiff penalties against traffickers in women and children and against users or buyers of prostituted victims. Under R.A. 9208, trafficking violators face a penalty from six years to life imprisonment and a fine ranging from P500,000 to P5 million (10,200 USD - 102,000 USD). Trafficking became a non-bailable offense. The law also entitled victims and survivors to counseling, temporary shelter, health care, legal assistance, and access to the government's witness protection program. In 2006, prosecutors investigated and pursued 62 cases of alleged trafficking under R.A. 9208.

While government agencies undertook extensive efforts worldwide to fight trafficking, inadequate funding was a chronic problem throughout the government in all fields. Anti-trafficking resources focused primarily on prevention and protection for overseas Filipino workers. The strongest efforts existed in the areas of helping to prevent persons from becoming victims, repatriating victims in destination countries, and reintegrating them into Philippine society upon their return home.

In coordination with DOLE, the DFA, through its Philippine embassies, took the lead in protecting the rights of migrant workers abroad. Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs), the operating arm and overseas representative of DOLE, were

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under the supervision of the Philippine Chief of Mission or Ambassador. Thirty-nine labor attaches served at thirty-four POLOs around the world at Philippine diplomatic missions. Posts with a high number of overseas Filipino workers (OFW), such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Jeddah, Dhahrain/Al-Khobar, Dubai, Kuwait, and London, employed more than one labor attach to deal with the large caseloads. OFWs reported contract violations or abuse to POLOs who, in turn, referred the cases to the DFA or DOLE. POLOs provided access to rescue and repatriation, custodial and legal assistance, temporary shelter, and medical aid.

DSWD was the responsible agency for the social reintegration of victims of trafficking once they returned home. DSWD operated 42 temporary shelters for victims throughout the country. Thirteen of these shelters were supported by the Congressional Spouses Foundation, Inc. (CSFI), a non-profit charity organization. In addition to DSWD's services within the Philippines, eight social workers were deployed to the Philippine diplomatic missions in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait City, and Riyadh to provide psycho-social counseling to OFWs in distress, and worked in conjunction with POLOs. A social welfare attach in Malaysia coordinated with the Malaysian government in rescuing and repatriating victims of trafficking and other forms of abuse. DSWD also assigned two social workers to work with the NGO International Social Service (ISS) in Hong Kong and in Tokyo.

The Philippines was only occasionally a destination point for internationally trafficked individuals. Reports indicated trafficking from China, South Korea, and Russia of women to engage in prostitution. Internal trafficking generally included women from the Visayas and Mindanao regions to major metro areas to work as domestic servants or small-factory workers, as well as in the drug trade and in the commercial sex industry. Many were victims of traffickers from their local areas. Victims were often subject to violence, threats, debt bondage, and withholding of documents.

Traffickers most often targeted the multitudes of workers seeking overseas and urban employment. (More than 1,000,000 Filipino workers engaged in temporary overseas work assignment to all parts of the world in 2006. An estimated 12 percent of GDP came from workers' remittances.) The most common recruits for trafficking were girls and young women aged 13 to 30 from rural areas, mainly from impoverished families. Girls from ethnic minorities aged 10 to 15 also ended up as commercial sex workers. Traffickers often sent female recruiters to their own neighborhoods or villages to recruit friends or relatives, providing the victims a false sense of security. Traffickers often masqueraded as private employment recruiters, while actually cooperating with organized crime rings. The most common method to approach victims was to promise respectable and lucrative jobs with good benefits such as free room and board, transportation, and cash advances. Parents and guardians were often supportive, believing that work abroad is the key to ascending the socio-economic ladder. Traffickers used fake travel documents, falsified permits, and altered birth certificates.

1C. The GRP's ability to address the problem remained limited by inadequate funding, including for police. Corruption in the government and the general ineffectiveness of the judicial system were also factors that impeded the GRP's ability to prosecute trafficking cases. The lack of resources and high judgeship vacancy rate in the judiciary significantly slowed trial times. A 2005 UN Development Program (UNDP) and Philippine Supreme Court study found that the average trial takes over three years. Many GRP agencies have not yet fully implemented the 2003 anti-trafficking law due to lack of training and orientation on the scope and magnitude of the problem. While the GRP allocated resources through the DSWD to aid victims, funding was insufficient.

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National and international NGOs and other foreign donors (including the USG) complemented official GRP programs.

1D. The GRP had no central database of trafficking information. Several agencies maintained their own separate databases, but many of these did not focus exclusively on trafficking. The Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) collected information on transnational crime activities, but its records were not comprehensive. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), an attached agency of the DFA, developed a database to monitor legal problems involving Filipinos overseas, but its system was not restricted to trafficking and also generated reports on other cases such as domestic violence and human smuggling. The CFO plans to integrate this information into a shared GRP database on migration.

The DILG tasked the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) to maintain a database of trafficking cases based on the quarterly reports from PNP. In December 2006, the DILG directed the PNP to monitor trafficking cases and to provide information to the NAPOLCOM database, which NAPOLCOM began to make operational.

GRP officials involved in anti-TIP activities met regularly with concerned NGOs, foreign donors, embassies, and regional and international organizations to share information and assessments, but all agreed solid data about the extent of the problem remained difficult to obtain.

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PREVENTION
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13. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in Ref A, Para 28:

1A. The GRP considered trafficking a serious issue and actively took steps to combat trafficking. President Arroyo

and her administration frequently spoke out in public about the evils of trafficking and the efforts of the GRP to combat TIP. They made clear the GRP has zero tolerance for TIP in any form. Senior officials also stressed that the GRP would not condone official complicity in such trafficking. In June 2005, PNP arrested and DOJ charged police officer Dennis Reci for allegedly trafficking minors to engage in sexual slavery at his nightclub in Manila (which authorities shut down). Trial hearings were still ongoing; however, a decision is expected in 2007.

In December 2006, POEA issued new employment requirements for overseas Filipino household workers better to protect them from widespread employer abuse and trafficking in persons. The new requirements increased the monthly minimum wage from US\$200 to US\$400 and raised the minimum age from 18 to 23. In addition, household workers must obtain a certificate of competency to attest to their skills and employers to submit employment contracts for verification. POEA acknowledged the measures were necessary because, while household workers accounted for approximately 10 percent of all overseas workers, they represented 90 percent of all complaints to Filipino labor attaches worldwide.

1B. Several cabinet level agencies and sub-agencies actively worked to combat trafficking in the Philippines. The IACAT coordinated, monitored, and oversaw the implementation of R.A. 9208, and served as an umbrella organization to coordinate anti-TIP efforts. The DOJ Secretary and the DSWD Secretary co-chaired IACAT. Other member agencies included

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DFA, DOLE, POEA, NCRFW, NBI, BI, and the PNP. Three NGOs representing women, children, and overseas Filipino workers were also part of the IACAT.

On September 20-22, 2006, the IACAT, in partnership and with support from the donor community, held the First National

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Conference on Anti-trafficking in Persons in Manila. The national conference brought together government organizations, NGOs, and civil society groups to facilitate a multi-sectoral assessment of the initial progress in the implementation of the national strategic action plan against trafficking in persons; generate concrete, doable, and measurable commitments from various sectors including funding organizations; and share relevant experiences, good practices, and success stories.

In August 2006, the GRP created the Task Force Against Illegal Recruitment (TFAIR) to develop strategies against illegal recruitment activities, such as escort services at international airports. The DFA's Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) chaired the task force, with representatives from PNP, NBI, and other law enforcement agencies as members.

Various other GRP agencies' efforts in anti-trafficking included:

- DFA extended assistance to victims of trafficking abroad and oversaw the voluntary repatriation of victims. It acted as the central coordinating unit for all bilateral, regional, and multilateral efforts. The DFA's CFO provided pre-departure orientation and counseling services and offered liaison services to Filipinos immigrating overseas with the help of other GRP and private agencies. The CFO also coordinated with the BI regarding the apprehension of violators;

- The DFA's Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA) addressed trafficking issues involving migrant workers. It worked in conjunction with other GRP agencies, overseas workers, their families, NGOs, and religious groups to deliver assistance to Philippine nationals;

-- DSWD focused on the protection of victims. It implemented rehabilitative and protective programs for trafficked persons. It also provided temporary shelter to trafficked persons and abused women in coordination with NGOs;

-- DOLE was responsible for coordinating the GRP campaign against illegal recruitment and for maintaining records of overseas Filipino workers. It ensured the strict implementation of, and compliance with, the rules and guidelines on the employment of persons locally and overseas. It also monitored, documented, and reported cases of trafficking in persons involving employers and labor recruiters. DOLE officers worked as labor attaches at Philippine diplomatic missions and spent much of their time assisting overseas workers;

-- The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), an attached agency of DOLE, had responsibility for protecting overseas workers and their dependents. It provided counseling and legal assistance programs to overseas workers and conducted information dissemination and awareness campaigns. In countries with large numbers of OFWs, an OWWA officer often served as Assistant Labor Attach;

-- DOJ was responsible for protecting the rights of victims of trafficking and prosecuting traffickers. It also offered free legal assistance for trafficked persons in coordination with the DSWD, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), and NGOs. Fourteen prosecutors at the national office and about 45 prosecutors in regional offices specifically focused on trafficking cases;

-- NBI, PNP, and the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) worked to identify, investigate, and dismantle trafficking operations and prosecute offenders. The NBI created a task force on the protection of women against exploitation and abuse, and a separate task force on the protection of children;

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-- DILG conducted systematic information and prevention campaigns, and was creating a databank for the efficient monitoring, documentation, and prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons;

-- NCRFW instituted development plans for women and provided technical assistance in setting up and strengthening response to gender issues. It formulated and monitored policies on trafficking in persons in coordination with relevant government agencies;

-- BI administered and enforced immigration and alien administration laws and adopted measures for the apprehension of suspected traffickers both at the place of arrival and departure. It ensured the compliance of Filipinos engaged or married to foreign nationals with the guidance and counseling requirements in the trafficking law. It also controlled and monitored border points by deploying deputized marines to help enforce immigration laws;

-- POEA, affiliated with DOLE, was the primary administrator of licenses for recruitment agencies. An average of 3,000 -- and as many as 5,000 -- citizens visited POEA's main office each day, seeking employment overseas. Recruitment agencies cannot solicit employees for overseas work without the permission of POEA. POEA had authority to place on probation or bar from recruiting new workers any agencies in violation of POEA standards. POEA also administered pre-employment orientation seminars and pre-departure counseling programs to applicants for overseas employment. POEA trained diplomatic staff, overseas labor officers, and social welfare officers in methods for assisting trafficking victims abroad. It also provided free legal assistance to trafficked victims. According to POEA, the majority of trafficking cases reported

to labor attaches occurred in Malaysia, followed by Korea, Japan, and the Middle East as a region;

-- PCTC collected information for the effective monitoring, documentation, and prosecution of trafficking cases.

¶C. GRP agencies increased the frequency of their TIP information and education campaigns, mostly thanks to funding by bilateral international donor agencies.

-- The GRP, through IACAT, produced an anti-TIP infomercial that aired on local TV networks throughout the country in ¶2006. The infomercial provided basic information about TIP as well as information on how to report incidents to proper authorities;

-- NCRFW, in partnership with End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), the Coalition Against Trafficking of Women) Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), and other NGOs, conducted community awareness and education campaigns throughout the country in 2006;

-- POEA conducted nearly 1,000 pre-employment orientation seminars for more than 60,000 departing overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in 2006. These seminars sought to educate the OFWs on the risks and rewards of overseas employment. The seminar module included a video presentation on trafficking in persons;

-- In 2006, IACAT, in collaboration with ECPAT, CATW-AP, and USAID, conducted road show campaigns against human trafficking in two provinces (Samar and Baguio) identified as TIP &hotspot8 areas. The road shows aimed to raise the level of awareness in the community, especially for potential victims of trafficking and their families;

-- From April 2006 to February 2007, the ACILS/TUCP Anti-Trafficking Project conducted public awareness activities on TIP in 14 regions of the country. ACILS also distributed information, education, and communication

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materials on migration and trafficking issues to youth, women, civic and faith-based groups;

¶D. The GRP supported numerous additional programs to prevent trafficking. It promoted women's participation in economic decision-making and efforts to keep children enrolled in school. It provided skills training for women and access to capital via micro-loans to create new jobs. The goals of these efforts were to promote the local economy and lessen the need for women to go to urban centers or abroad to earn money.

DOLE was the lead agency of the National Program Against Child Labor (NPACL), a comprehensive inter-agency response to child labor in the Philippines. The program focused on preventing children from becoming victims of the worst forms of child labor (including trafficking) and ensuring that victims would receive protection and reintegration into society.

The CFO counseled Filipinos engaged or married to foreign nationals and provided information on intermarriage, migration, rights, and obligations, as well as available support networks abroad. Counseling sessions help to identify women at-risk of trafficking and foreigners engaging in trafficking activities under the pretext of intermarriage.

In order to obtain a marriage certificate, local registrars required that foreigners obtain a "Legal Capacity to Marry" statement from their embassy, attesting they were not married abroad.

DSWD provided social protection and promoted the rights and welfare of the disadvantaged sector. DSWD posted social workers at international airports to monitor the travel of

minors abroad. The Crisis Intervention Unit of DSWD's Quick Response Team served the needs of women victims of trafficking by strengthening and establishing working arrangements with government, non-government, professional, and civic organizations. Other efforts included organizing support groups and providing psycho-social, medical, legal and counseling services.

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education, an agency under the Department of Education (DepEd), developed learning modules for Parents of Working Children (PWC) in various regions with high incidence of the worst forms of child labor. Translated into local dialects, the modules educated parents about their children's health needs and basic rights and opportunities for livelihood and income-generating projects. DepEd also operated a home study program designed to prevent students from quitting school due to poverty, illness, or early marriage. With assistance from POEA and CFO, DepEd incorporated lessons on international migration (including illegal recruitment and mail order brides) into social studies and values education in public elementary and high schools throughout the country.

The POEA conducted pre-departure seminars for migrant workers, covering topics such as contracts, wages, benefits, etc. It also provided comprehensive community education and programs on trafficking.

1E. The relationship among GRP officials, NGOs, and other elements of civil society concerned with trafficking issues was excellent. NGOs assisted the government in preventing trafficking activities, protecting and reintegrating trafficking victims, and prosecuting traffickers. NGOs often referred trafficking victims to GRP agencies, as the NGOs lacked the necessary funding fully to help victims and their families. GRP agencies recognized the importance of engaging NGOs in their advocacy programs. Several GRP agencies had NGO desks that oversaw GRP-NGO coordination. Additionally, three NGOs focused on women, children, and OFWs were part of the IACAT.

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Two examples of strong NGO-government relationships were the experiences of the Visayan Forum Foundation and the International Justice Mission. The VFF coordinated closely with local law enforcement and private industry in rescuing trafficking victims at Manila's North Harbor and other ports.

From April 2006 to January 2007, the VFF assisted 2,920 victims of trafficking at major port areas. Since 2001, the IJM, a US-based NGO employing private Filipino investigators and prosecutors, coordinated with the GRP to increase the number of pro bono prosecutions in the country, including under the 2003 anti-trafficking law. IJM investigated and gathered evidence against establishments that employed prostitutes and children, and shared this information with the NBI and the PNP. IJM's private prosecutors then filed criminal cases for sexually abused women and children. IJM and DOJ prosecutors coordinated in pursuing legal cases. The U.S. Department of State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau (INL) funded in 2004 a two-year project for IJM to accelerate prosecutions nationwide.

1F. Approximately five million passengers transited Manila's North Harbor annually, the country's largest port. As many as half were in search of employment. Despite efforts to guard major port areas, the GRP did not have sufficient resources adequately to monitor its borders. With more than 7,000 islands, fully monitoring maritime borders was virtually impossible given the limited resources of the maritime services.

The Philippine Coast Guard, under the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC), intercepted some ferries in order to identify trafficked victims and illegal recruiters in coordination with private shipping companies.

The Maritime Police conducted investigations upon the disembarkation of passengers. It referred victims of trafficking to GRP agencies or local NGOs for further assistance.

Owners, managers, and key personnel of shipping companies conducted regular orientation and awareness seminars with their crews to educate them on ways to identify and report suspected trafficking victims onboard. Often, shipping companies assisted in facilitating the repatriation of minors by offering discounted fares.

In February 2007, IACAT established its first anti-trafficking task force at Manila's international airport. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons included representatives from the Manila International Airport Authority, the Airport Police Department, BI, NBI, PNP, Pasay City Prosecutor's Office, POEA, Bureau of Customs, DFA, CFO, DSWD, and the Airline Operators Council. The Task Force will improve information-sharing across agencies in order to improve the interception, investigation, and prosecution of traffickers, as well as to coordinate immediate assistance to trafficking victims. IACAT plans to establish similar task forces at the airports in Cebu, Davao, and Zamboanga.

1G. The IACAT coordinated, monitored, and oversaw the implementation of the Anti-TIP Law, and served as an umbrella organization to coordinate anti-TIP efforts in the Philippines. The DOJ Secretary and the DWSO Secretary co-chaired the IACAT. Other member agencies included DFA, DOLE, POEA, NCRFW, NBI, BI, and the PNP. Three NGOs representing women, children, and overseas Filipino workers were also part of the IACAT.

In addition to the national-level IACAT, the GRP created local and regional inter-agency councils against TIP. The local IACATs similarly included various GRP agencies, local government units, and NGOs. Alongside the local IACATs, local task forces in some hot spot areas coordinated law enforcement and prosecution efforts.

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The DOJ led a National Task Force on the Protection of Women Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination, as well as a Task Force on Child Protection, to address violation cases against women and children.

The Anti-Illegal Recruitment Coordinating Councils (AIRCCs) served as a venue at the grassroots level for consultation and information sharing to map out strategies in improving the GRP's anti-illegal recruitment programs.

The Sub-Committee on Human Trafficking of the National Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (NALECC) met regularly for data sharing on human trafficking cases and adopting measures to improve coordination.

Local Councils for the Protection of Children existed at the provincial, city, municipality, and village levels to assist in identifying conditions related to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to facilitate immediate responses to reported cases of child abuse and exploitation.

Both the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission pursued official corruption cases and coordinated the GRP's anti-corruption efforts.

1H. The GRP had a national plan to address TIP, created with NGO input. IACAT implemented the plan involving DOJ, DSWD, DOLE, and other agencies. All agencies involved in IACAT had shared responsibilities for developing and implementing anti-trafficking programs. As co-chair of IACAT, the DOJ ensured the protection of persons accused of trafficking, provided access to free GRP or NGO legal assistance, and

trained prosecutors in handling trafficking-related cases. DSWD took the lead in implementing rehabilitative and protective programs for trafficked persons and providing victims with counseling and temporary shelter. It also developed a system for accreditation among NGOs in order to establish centers and programs for intervention at the community level.

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INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

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14. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in Ref A, Para 29.

1A. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act 9208) is the Philippine landmark legislation in protecting women and children from sexual exploitation and forced labor. The law affirmed the GRP's resolve to prevent and suppress the illegal trade in persons, especially women and children, and carried penalties not only against traffickers but also against users or buyers of victims. If the victim of trafficking was a minor, the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of the child for the purpose of exploitation was enough to file a case against a trafficker. There was no need to show that such acts were made through threats, use of force, or other coercive measures.

In addition to the anti-trafficking law, the GRP used several laws to prosecute traffickers, including: the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act (Republic Act 8042), which gave the GRP the authority to combat illegal recruiting; the Mail-Order Bride Law (Republic Act 6955), which made it unlawful under exploitative circumstances for Filipino women to marry foreign men; the Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995 (Republic Act 8043), which ensured the protection of Filipino children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and/or sale; the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (Republic Act 7610), which established penalties for traffickers; and the Anti-Child Labor Law (Republic Act 9231), which prohibited the employment of children below 15 except when granted

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special permission by DOLE, and guaranteed the protection, health, and safety of child workers.

1B. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 imposed harsh penalties on persons engaged in trafficking. The law distinguished three types of violations: direct participation in trafficking; acts that promoted trafficking; and more serious acts of trafficking, called "qualified" trafficking. The penalty for a direct act was a fine of P1 million to P2 million (20,400 USD - 40,800 USD) and 20 years imprisonment; promotion of trafficking through falsification of documents and tampering with certificates carried up to 15 years imprisonment and a fine of P500,000 to P1 million (10,200 USD - 20,400 USD). The maximum penalty was if the victim was a child, if conducted on a large scale, or if the crime involved military or law enforcement agencies and public officers or employees, which could result in life imprisonment and a fine of P2 million to P5 million (40,800 USD - 102,000 USD). Those who engaged the services of trafficked persons for prostitution faced penalties of between six months of community service and a fine of P50,000 (1,020 USD) to a maximum of one-year imprisonment and a fine of P100,000 (2,040 USD).

1C. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 prescribed the same penalties for forced or bonded labor as for sexual exploitation. The law clearly stated that it was illegal to recruit, transport, transfer, harbor, provide, or receive a person by any means, including under the pretext of domestic or overseas employment, training, or apprenticeship, for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation,

forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude, or debt bondage. Activities that promoted or facilitated trafficking could result in imprisonment of up to 15 years and a fine between P500,000 to P1 million (10,200 USD - 20,400 USD).

1D. Under Republic Act 8353, the Anti-Rape Law of 1997, the penalty for rape ranged from life imprisonment to death. Under Republic Act 7877, or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, any person who violated the provisions of the act shall face imprisonment of not less than one month or more than six months, or a fine of up to P20,000 (400 USD), or both a fine and imprisonment.

1E. Prostitution was illegal, but remained widespread. Many prostitutes worked independently in small brothels rather than in prominent entertainment clubs. Hostesses, referred to as "guest relations officers" (GROs), sometimes engaged in illegal prostitution, although their employers usually barred them from leaving an establishment with a customer. The GRP required GROs to undergo frequent health checks.

An anti-prostitution bill was under consideration in the House of Representatives in its 13th session. It would punish those involved in the industry, such as pimps and brothel owners, while decriminalizing the action of those exploited in the prostitution industry. The draft bill stated that women and children who engaged in prostitution could be victims and should be free from criminal liability. It also stated that people exploited in prostitution were entitled to support, protection, and may seek legal redress.

1F. In 2006, law enforcement agencies filed 60 trafficking cases with DOJ. Of these, DOJ filed 26 in court, while the rest were in preliminary investigation. In total, DOJ had ongoing prosecutions in 97 cases, including cases filed in previous years. Courts in 2005 convicted four individuals in two cases under the 2003 anti-trafficking law. All four convicted traffickers received life sentences because the crime was determined to be "qualified trafficking" due to the involvement of minors as victims and of organized trafficking syndicates. Their appeals were ongoing. Three of the convicted traffickers were in jail serving their sentences, while one was out on bail pending his appeal. In addition, two traffickers pled guilty to the lesser charge of using the

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services of a trafficking victim in November 2005, resulting in a sentence of six months community service. There were no new convictions under the Anti-TIP Law during this reporting period. However, the absence of new convictions did not necessarily reflect an unwillingness to prosecute or convict; instead, it reflected a judicial process that on average takes three years from the filing of charges to resolution of a case. There were convictions under related legislation, such as child abuse and illegal recruitment.

Under certain circumstances and with approval of the court, Philippine law permitted private prosecutors to prosecute cases under the direction and control of a public prosecutor.

The GRP used this provision effectively, allowing and supporting IJM to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. In addition to DOJ's ongoing TIP cases, IJM initiated 23 criminal cases of qualified trafficking against suspected traffickers. Of these 23 cases, ten were on trial at the end of the reporting period, three were in preliminary hearings, five were under investigation, three were in arraignment, and two were pending review with the DOJ.

The GRP's system of collecting and maintaining data on criminal activity in general was inefficient but improving, including on trafficking. The IACAT provided its best available information for this report in a pro-active and helpfully responsive manner.

1G. NGOs reported that organized crime syndicates from Japan and China controlled most of the sex industry in Manila.

Employment agencies were involved in much of the trafficking both within the country and to overseas destinations. They may also have had a role in trafficking of persons into the country. Some of these agencies may have also undertaken legitimate recruitment of personnel, making it particularly challenging to identify illegal recruitment, as the line between legitimate and illegitimate agencies was blurred. Other recruiters may have been relatives or neighbors, while some parents and guardians sold their children into bondage. In many cases, trafficking syndicates used Filipino women in their mid-40s or older to seek out victims, given a belief that older women were the least likely to harm younger women.

¶H. The GRP actively investigated cases of trafficking-related offenses, but was hampered by scarce resources. The principal investigative agencies were BI, NBI, and PNP. At PNP, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Women and Children's Concerns Division handled most trafficking cases. From April 2006 to December 2006, PNP investigated 31 cases of trafficking, involving 35 victims, of whom 32 were children and 3 were women. PNP recommended 29 cases to the DOJ for prosecution.

The BI ensured that all foreign nationals within its territorial jurisdiction complied with existing laws to ensure the protection of women and children against commercial sexual exploitation. BI's interceptions at Philippine airports typically went to NBI for further investigation.

Private attorneys working for NGOs such as the IJM and VFF could file trafficking cases on behalf of victims. The Anti-Wiretapping Act of 1965 did not authorize most forms of electronic surveillance, although a new Human Security Act of 2007 that Congress approved in February 2007 will expand such coverage.

¶I. GRP agencies continued to increase the frequency of TIP training and orientation efforts. The programs included training for several thousand officials, including prosecutors, judges, NBI investigators, local government units, and city councilors. In 2006, the IACAT, under USAID's Rule of Law Effectiveness Program, conducted training and consultations with prosecutors and law enforcers on investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases

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and seminars on effective coordination and networking against TIP.

In September 2006, the IACAT, in coordination with UNICEF, USAID, and TAF, hosted the first National Conference to Combat Trafficking in Persons. These events brought together hundreds of officials and NGO leaders to develop an anti-TIP strategy and action plan for 2007.

In 2006, BI trained many of its immigration officers on gender-sensitivity, as well child-friendly investigation techniques.

¶J. The GRP cooperated with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of TIP cases, including with Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and Sweden. Because there was no central database linking the various law enforcement agencies, there was no certain total number of cooperative investigations conducted. The Philippines had treaties on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters with Australia and the United States. The Philippines was also a signatory to the ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty to share information and evidence among ASEAN member-states.

The Philippines participated in other international efforts to prevent, monitor, and control trafficking. Having completed Phase I of an agreement with the United Nations Center for International Crime Prevention-Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (CICP/ODCCP) to gather

information on organized criminal groups involved in trafficking, the DSWD began to implemented the second phase of a project to provide capacity building to service providers in havens for women and children, rehabilitate trafficked victims by providing full security, financial assistance, and non-formal training, and establish linkages with the business community for possible internship programs.

¶K. Philippine law permitted extradition, and the Philippines had extradition treaties with Australia, Canada, the Federated States of Micronesia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United States, and the Kingdom of Thailand. Under the terms of the 2003 anti-trafficking law, trafficking in persons was an extraditable offense. However, the government received no extradition requests for trafficking offenders, foreign or national.

¶L. There was no evidence establishing official involvement in, or tolerance of, trafficking on a local and institutional level. However, officials (such as customs officers, border guards, immigration officials, local police or others) allegedly received bribes from traffickers or otherwise assisted in their operations.

¶M. The Office of the Ombudsman conducted regular investigations into corruption allegations. In June 2005, DOJ charged a Manila police officer for violating the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, leading to the arrest of Officer Dennis Reci for allegedly trafficking minors for sexual exploitation at his nightclub in Manila (which authorities shut down). He remained under detention at the Manila City Jail; the trial hearing continued.

¶N. Child sex tourism continued to be a serious problem for the Philippines. Sex tourists reportedly came from Europe, the United States, and parts of Asia to engage in sexual activity with minors. The GRP cooperated with the USG in prosecuting American nationals under the terms of the U.S. PROTECT Act of 2003, which criminalized the commission by American nationals overseas of child abuse, including child pornography and other sexual offenses against a minor. The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security noted the stellar cooperation from the GRP in three notable PROTECT Act cases involving

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Edilberto Datan, Bernard Lawrence Russell, and John W. Seljan. In each case, the individuals traveled to the Philippines to engage in sexual activity with minors. All three received convictions; courts also ordered Edilberto Datan and Bernard Russell to pay restitution fees to their victims.

¶O. The GRP signed and ratified the following international instruments:

-- ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor: ratified in October 2000;

-- ILO Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor: ratified in November 1960;

-- ILO Convention 29 Concerning Forced Labor: ratified on July 15, 2005;

-- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime: ratified in October 2001;

-- Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography supplementing the Convention on the Rights

of the Child: ratified in April 2002;

-- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons
and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others:
ratified in September 1952;

-- International Convention for the Suppression of the
Traffic in Women and Children: ratified in September 1954;

-- International Convention for the Suppression of the
Traffic in Women of Full Age: ratified in September 1954;

-- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination Against Women: ratified in May 1981;

-- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:
ratified in September 1990;

-- UN International Convention on the Protection of the
Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families:
ratified on July 1995;

-- Oslo Agenda of Action on Child Labor: ratified in December
1991;

-- 1996 Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action Against
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: ratified in
December 1992;

-- The Optional Protocol on the Suppression of Trafficking in
Persons Especially Women and Children: ratified in October
2001;

-- UN Convention on Transnational Crime: ratified in May 2002.

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PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS
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15. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained
in Ref A, Para 30.

1A. The GRP assisted victims by providing temporary residency
status, relief from deportation, shelter, and access to
legal, medical, and psychological services. Additional
protective services included telephone hotlines for reporting
abused/exploited cases of women and children.

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The DSWD's Residential Care unit provided 24-hour residential
group care to children on a temporary basis to facilitate
healing, recovery, and reintegration with their families and
communities. DSWD maintained 42 residential care units; of
these, 13 centers were for women, 13 for girls, and the
remaining for men, boys, and the elderly. Substitute homes,
or havens, served the needs of female victims of trafficking
and other forms of abuse. Twelve substitute homes provided
shelter for over 1,400 women and their children. The DSWD
also referred cases to accredited NGOs for children and
accredited NGOs for women, which provided temporary shelter
and community services to women and children in crisis,
including victims of trafficking. During 2006, the DSWD
assisted 1,567 people through its residential and community
based services.

Crisis intervention and child protection units operated in
many public hospitals throughout the country. The crisis
units also provided telephone counseling, conducted rescue
operations, and provided overnight facilities and referral
services for longer-term shelters. Women and Children
Protection Units in Department of Health (DOH) hospitals
offered medical services and psychological counseling to
victims of violence. The Philippine General Hospital in
Manila evaluated and treated TIP victims on behalf of the GRP.

The Philippines AIDS Prevention and Control Act required documented Overseas Filipino Workers to participate in a HIV/AIDS seminar as part of the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar. Actual testing was only upon the request of the OFW or if the country of destination so required, especially for sea-based workers. The law did not provide mandatory HIV/AIDS screening for trafficking victims. However, the rate of HIV/AIDS in the Philippines remained low, although often cases may have been underreported. UNAIDS estimated that 12,000 people lived with HIV in the Philippines, but this figure could grow quickly.

1B. The GRP cooperated well with NGOs to support and provide services to trafficking victims. The Philippine Ports Authority's Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point Program, an agency under the DOTC, provided the building and amenities for a halfway house, which the VFF managed. Activities of the halfway house staff included regular inspection of the different port areas, assistance to possible victims of traffickers and victims of illegal recruitment, information dissemination, and basic orientation seminars.

In July 2006, VFF signed a 10-year agreement with the Manila International Airport Authority to establish an airport halfway house for TIP victims. Under this partnership, VFF will also train airport immigration and customs officials on how to identify potential victims of human trafficking.

VFF ran the Multi-Sectoral Network Against Trafficking in Persons (MSNAT) to promote cooperation and sustain partnership among government, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society. GRP partners included the DOJ, DOLE, DFA, DILG, DSWD, National Police Commission, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Commission on Human Rights. DSWD provided limited funding to accredited NGOs to help meet the basic needs of victims, such as food, clothing, medicine, and legal services. With assistance from DFA, DSWD established arrangements with NGOs in other countries to provide distressed OFWs with temporary shelter, counseling, and medical assistance.

VFF, which the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report highlighted in 2004 for its best practices, renewed a five-year partnership agreement with the Philippine Ports Authority to continue to operate halfway houses for victims and potential victims of TIP, currently in Manila, Batangas, Sorsogon, and Davao. It plans to open additional halfway houses and safe houses for TIP victims in other regions.

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In general, NGOs cannot rely on government funding. They typically turned to foreign governments, foreign and domestic religious groups, third-country and multinational donor agencies, and private foundations. However, the GRP remained highly aware of the value of NGOs in combating trafficking, and routinely sought cooperation and input from NGOs.

1C. The implementing rules of the 2003 anti-trafficking law outlined procedures to identify and refer victims of trafficking, whether the incident occurred inside or outside of the country. After rescue operations, investigation, and filing of cases, victims of trafficking rescued within the country went under the custody of the DSWD for proper treatment. For cases overseas, consular officers and personnel from the POLO conducted visits to the jail, work site, or residence of the victim, and then provided temporary shelter, and legal, financial, and repatriation assistance to the victims. Upon arrival in the Philippines, the DSWD, the NBI, or PNP provided psycho-social interventions, psychological and medical examinations, and therapy sessions, if necessary.

Port personnel referred victims, as well as domestic workers detained at port police stations, to the halfway houses run by the VFF. The DSWD also referred cases of physical and

verbal abuse against domestic workers to VFF for psycho-social intervention and short-term care until repatriation of the victims. The VFF maintained four halfway houses in strategic port areas in Manila, Davao, Batangas, and Sorsogon, and similarly coordinated with the PPA, DOLE, DSWD, shipping companies, and workers' groups. Halfway house staff provided direct services to trafficked victims in ports, including temporary shelter, referral, repatriation, and counseling.

1D. The 2003 anti-trafficking law recognized trafficked persons as victims and did not penalize them for crimes related to the acts of trafficking or for obeying traffickers, regardless of their consent to exploitation. Police sometimes brought charges of vagrancy against alleged prostitutes, however.

1E. The GRP actively encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and related crimes. Victims can file civil suits or seek legal action against traffickers. The Secretary of Justice issued a DOJ Circular instructing that all cases involving violations of the anti-trafficking law should receive preferential attention. The circular also ordered all prosecutors to reject calls by defense attorneys for dismissal of cases in which the victims recant their testimony. Pursuant to the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act, an all-female team of police officers, examining physicians, and prosecutors must handle investigations of offenses committed against women. In the case of trafficked children, the Special Protection of Children Act and the Rule on Examination of a Child Witness mandated that a single panel interview to avoid the damaging effect of feeling re-victimized through a series of repeated questioning. All fines by the courts on the offenders accrue to a Trust Fund that IACAT administered, which it used to prevent acts of trafficking, protect and rehabilitate victims, and reintegrate trafficked persons into the community.

1F. Under the Witness Protection, Security, and Benefit Program, the DOJ offered protection to witnesses from reprisals and economic dislocation by providing security protection, immunity from criminal prosecution, housing, livelihood expenses, travel expenses, medical benefits, education to dependents, and job security. However, some witness protection participants complained of insufficient security and of abusive guards. Moreover, due to lack of resources to fund the program, many who would have liked to participate could not. Many other potential witnesses may

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not have been aware of the existence of this program. In addition to the halfway houses, VFF also ran two safehouses in Manila and Legazpi for longer protective custody of victims, especially for those who decided to take legal actions against traffickers.

1G. The GRP, through IACAT and with funding from USAID and others, conducted regular training seminars for GRP officials, including those from DSWD, PNP, DOJ, DFA, DOLE, Commission on Human Rights, and various NGOs, on gender-sensitive and child-friendly handling of trafficking cases.

The BI also conducted periodic training on basic immigration laws and procedures for immigration officers and agents in the field and other personnel involved in operations. Training on anti-trafficking in persons was in the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) for consular staff, as well as Foreign Service officers and attaches en route to foreign missions. ILO and the GRP's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) developed an anti-trafficking in persons training module. The training module (in CD format) will benefit DFA Foreign Service officers who were unable to undergo anti-trafficking training through PDOS.

H. DFA, OWWA, and DSWD assisted repatriated Filipino workers who were victims of trafficking. The OWWA's Halfway Home program provided temporary shelter, transport services, financial assistance, and counseling services through a network of NGOs. The DSWD, working with DOLE and DOH, provided protective custody, recovery, and healing services for victims. Services included organization of support groups, psychological and psychiatric interventions, medical, legal and livelihood services, provision of limited financial assistance, and educational assistance.

I. The vibrant local and international NGO community in the Philippines included many that work directly with trafficking victims. The most active contributors included:

-- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) is an international network of feminist groups, organizations, and individuals fighting the sexual exploitation of women. The coalition brings attention to trafficking in women and girls, prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, and bride selling, mainly through media campaigns and policy advocacy. It provides preventive education program on migration and trafficking at the community and grassroots level and conducts dialogues with government agencies such as the POEA, DOLE, and DSWD on preventive and curative measures. Services include referring trafficking cases to member and partner organizations for legal, counseling and support services, and documentation of trafficking cases based on the Human Rights Information and Documentation System used by a global network of organizations concerned with human rights issues;

-- VFF focuses on the promotion of child welfare, especially migrant working children, and is active on the issue of domestic trafficking of women and children. It provides 24-hour services for victims, including the operation of several temporary shelters, counseling, employment referrals, training, and advocacy. Staff positioned at port arrival areas identify and intercept probable victims of trafficking as they disembark ships. Through funding assistance from The Asia Foundation and the USG, VFF spearheaded the creation of MSNAT, a national network committed to provide immediate and appropriate response mechanisms to prevent trafficking, investigate and prosecute offenders, and protect, rescue, recover, and reintegrate victims, especially women and children;

-- TUCP is the largest trade union network in the Philippines. The TUCP forges coalitions with various labor groups in its efforts to promote and protect the rights and

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welfare of workers and other disadvantaged groups, including women, youth and children, and migrant workers. Its Women's Bureau is particularly active in anti-trafficking initiatives, such as public information and media campaigns, database collection and documentation, provision of legal assistance to victims, and networking. With funding support from the American Center for International Labor Solidarity and the USG, TUCP conducted an anti-trafficking project establishing a coalition of private sector organizations that will coordinate with the government to ensure the implementation of activities on trafficking in persons;

-- ACILS, active in the Philippines since 1969, has an extensive network with the GRP, NGOs, trade unions, academia, and the business community. ACILS addresses labor issues, including irregular migration and trafficking in persons. In 2003, ACILS established a multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (TWG) to assist trafficking victims, monitor trafficking developments, process inquiries and complaints, and initiate filing of trafficking cases. TWG is composed of 37 organizations including 18 national government agencies, and 19 trade union, NGOs, and advocacy groups;

-- Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) addresses the

concerns of Filipino women migrants in Japan as well as the growing number of Japanese-Filipino children (JFCs). Almost 90 percent of Filipino OFWs in Japan are female entertainers, making them vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation. In coordination with its DAWN-Japan volunteers, the local branch assists JFCs abandoned by their Japanese fathers;

-- Women's Legal Bureau (WLB) is a feminist legal NGO composed of lawyers, academics, and members of other professions. It provides legal services to victim and survivors of violence against women and conducts education and information campaigns to raise public awareness on women's issues. Other programs include representation of women in judicial proceedings, training of law enforcers and members of the legal profession on gender sensitivity, empowering communities to respond to feminist issues especially those involving violence against women, and working with women's groups toward promoting human rights;

-- Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TWMAEW) addresses the needs of children and women in prostitution and other victims of sexual exploitation through shelters and support centers. It offers skills training, livelihood assistance, and psycho-social intervention. In collaboration with UNICEF and DepEd, it conducted awareness-raising campaigns on sexual abuse for 13,291 elementary school pupils. Social workers, educators, and survivors of sexual abuse facilitated the workshops;

-- Kanlungan Center Foundation (KCF) works with OFWs and their families in addressing the problems of migrant workers. It provides legal and welfare assistance, psycho-social counseling, temporary shelter, and education and training. Courses include Basic Migrants, Orientation, Migrant Rights, Legal Remedies, and Gender Awareness and Sensitivity. Kanlungan also intervenes at the grassroots level and addresses the psycho-social and economic causes and effects of migration by forging partnerships with other organizations at the community level;

-- End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) campaigns to raise general public awareness in tourism, the travel industry, and high-risk communities on the issue of children victims of sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. ECPAT is a member of the Special Committee for the Protection of Children under the DOJ and works with local government units in major provinces and cities, other NGOs, and church-based organizations.

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Heroes and Best Practices -- International Justice Mission
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16. (U) Our nominees for "Heroes" and "Best Practices" follow:

Anti-Trafficking Hero Nomination for 2007:

Patricia (&Patty8) Sison-Arroyo is a brilliant, tireless, advocate against human trafficking in the Philippines and regularly pressures the government to improve its prosecution of human traffickers. She currently serves as IJM Executive Director in the Philippines, and in this capacity, she administers a U.S. Government-sponsored project to prosecute cases on behalf of trafficking victims. Attorney Sison-Arroyo's support in both public and private spheres of the legal battle against trafficking have been critical to moving the anti-TIP agenda forward in the Philippines. Embassy Manila recognized Attorney Sison-Arroyo's significant contributions to the anti-TIP efforts in the Philippines by awarding her the 2006 Benigno Aquino Fellow for Public Service. Through this fellowship, she traveled to several U.S. cities to meet with American anti-TIP experts.

Anti-Trafficking Best Practices:

IJM continued to lead the non-governmental efforts to prosecute human traffickers in the Philippines. Although IJM investigations have not yet led to any convictions, IJM's private prosecutors were handling 23 separate criminal court cases in conjunction with their GRP counterparts. Since IJM started operations in the Philippines in 2001, IJM has successfully rescued more than 100 children who were victims of sexual exploitation, including alleged TIP victims. IJM has also provided information to police leading to closure of numerous bars that were employing and sexually exploiting minor and adult victims of trafficking.

In February 2007, IJM began a training program with the National Bureau of Investigation that can only be viewed as a best practice.⁸ In a week-long session with selected NBI investigators, IJM not only trained the participants on the investigative techniques under the 2003 anti-TIP law, but it also conducted and led joint operations against two metro-Manila area bars, suspected of trafficking minors. IJM and NBI investigators conducted surveillance and raided the two suspected bars, rescued 11 minors, and filed the appropriate complaints with the DOJ against the bar owners and employees. Embassy Manila congratulates IJM on its tireless efforts as an NGO to improve the law enforcement and prosecutorial abilities of the GRP to combat trafficking in persons.

KENNEY